

SYMPOSIUM ON NUCLEAR SEX. Edited by D. Robertson Smith, M.A., M.D., and William M. Davidson, M.D. (Pp. xvii + 188; illustrated. 21s.) London: Heinemann Medical Books, 1958.

THIS collection of papers read at a symposium at King's College, London, in September, 1957, and published in November, 1958, is an account of studies, almost all of which have started from the discovery by Barr and Bertram in 1949 of a tiny mass of chromatin present in the nuclei of females and not in the nuclei of males. Professor Barr recounts in the introduction how carefully recorded observations of nerve cells in the hypoglossal nucleus following experimental stimulation during studies of fatigue revealed this difference. It is an interesting account of how pure research can yield important results in entirely different directions from that expected. It also illustrates how research must be free to follow the unexpected finding.

After seven papers on cytological and genetic aspects there are twelve describing studies of intersex and related states and three on the sex chromatin in tumours. Participants included most of the leading workers in the world in this specialized field. Discussion is reported and the papers carry full references.

Anyone seeking a clear exposition of the technique of nuclear sexing and its contribution to clinical medicine will be disappointed in this collection of papers, but anyone specially interested will find much valuable information which it would be hard to discover from any other source.

J. E. M.

AN INTRODUCTION TO PATHOLOGY. By G. Payling Wright, D.M., F.R.C.P. Third Edition. (Pp. xii + 660; illustrated. 45s.) London: Longmans Green, 1958.

THERE is some risk that integration of the basic science of pathology with medicine and surgery and any further shortening of the course in general pathology will result in over-emphasis of practical aspects, often of ephemeral interest and value, at the expense of a real understanding of the basic mechanisms which underlie disease processes. The reaction against general pathology is in part a reaction against the deadly dull presentation of structural pathology in older textbooks.

This book should be read by all those who wish to appreciate how the basic facts in anatomy, physiology and general biology and in histopathology and bacteriology can contribute to the understanding of human disease. The book, with its blending of historical references and well-chosen references from modern literature, is a scholarly and balanced presentation. There is, perhaps, more in this book than the average medical student can hope to assimilate, but if he studies it he should come to see how the basic sciences are the basis of modern medicine, and that pathology is much more than the correlation of post-mortem observations with clinical symptoms.

J. E. M.

MEDICAL TERMS: THEIR ORIGIN AND CONSTRUCTION. By Ffrangcon Roberts, M.A., M.D., F.F.R. Third Edition. (Pp. viii + 92. 6s.) London: Heinemann Medical Books, 1959.

THIS little book is a third edition in five years and is of proven value. It gives a clear presentation of how words in medicine have been derived by rational, and sometimes irrational, routes and affords, incidentally, many interesting glimpses of changes in the concept of disease through the centuries.

The great debt of medical terminology to words of Greek and Latin origin is apparent from the lists at the end of the book. Indeed, so little of this extensive classical vocabulary will be acquired by those fulfilling the minimum standard in Latin still required by some universities that the value of such a training as an aid to the understanding of medical terminology is very open to question. Probably the student spending a few evenings with this book will gain more insight into the vocabulary of medicine than he would obtain by years of study of Latin as it is usually taught in schools.

J. E. M.